



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2005

V CORPS MEDIC HELPS DELIVER BABY DURING HELICOPTER FLIGHT IN AFGHANISTAN

Combined Forces-Afghanistan release

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – V Corps medic Spc. Kyle Storbakken might consider changing his name to “Stork-bakken” now, after helping deliver a baby Afghan girl in a helicopter on the fly.



SGT ADRIAN SCHULTE

Peer Mullah Khan, his wife, Melawa, and their new baby rest in the coalition hospital at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. A V Corps medic is credited with providing vital assistance in delivering the baby in mid-March in of a Black Hawk helicopter that was rushing the mother to emergency medical treatment.

Storbakken, of the corps' 159th Medical Company based in Wiesbaden, Germany, is credited by a team of Army medics from Forward Operations Base Salerno with providing vital assistance in delivering the girl -- and perhaps saving the lives of the infant and its mother -- while flying in the back of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in mid-March.

It's not exactly the kind of scenario an Army medical evacuation helicopter crew member expects to face in a battle zone, and Storbakken seemed a little taken aback by the event.

“It was pretty intense,” the specialist said. “It’s hard to

believe we helped a woman give birth to a baby up there."

The mother, the 40-year-old wife of a village elder near Shkin, had been in labor for 18 hours when the village midwife notified a nearby U.S. military medical sergeant of her serious complications.

The sergeant's diagnosis of the mother's situation was bleak -- he that her condition could threaten both her life and the baby's. Officials at Combined Joint Task Force 76 launched a medical helicopter from FOB Salerno, near the town of Khowst, to evacuate the woman to a U.S. Army hospital.

But the little girl could not wait to arrive. Storbakken, a medical technician, and Dr.

(Lt. Col.) David Barber, commander of the 249th General Hospital's medical detachment at FOB Salerno, delivered her while in flight from Shkin back to Khowst.

The baby and mother were transported to Bagram Airfield, where doctors reported both to be in good health.



MASTER SGT GEOFFREY CARTER
Medic Spc. Kyle Storbakken of
V Corps' 159th Medical
Company (Air Ambulance),
based in Wiesbaden, Germany

"It's a credit to the entire medical team, from the medic on the ground to the aircrew and the hospital staff," said Maj. Shannon Beckett, commander of the 68th Medical Company Forward (Air Ambulance).

Beckett and all involved credit Storbakken, 25, of Mukilteo, Wash., for his outstanding efforts.

Storbakken helped the woman and her husband onto the helicopter. Shortly after it took off, the woman's situation appeared to worsen, Storbakken said. A few minutes after pilot Chief Warrant Officer 3 Erick Swanberg took off at full speed toward the U.S. camp near Khowst, Storbakken came over the aircraft's intercom with good news.

"We've got a baby girl," announced the specialist, after he cut the umbilical cord.

Swanberg radioed to escort aircraft, "Hey, we've got another passenger on board."

The girl's birth may be the first time a baby was born aboard a helicopter in a combat zone, Swanberg said.

"It's great to have helped bring a life into the world, rather than having one taken," Swanberg said.

The event is still sinking into the minds of the crew, which also included 1st Lt. Joshua Ingram and Spc. Daniel Pappizzo.

"I'm just glad we were there to help," Storbakken said. "It was pretty amazing."

